

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1921

S E C R E T MANAMA 00250

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : MARR, BA, US

SUBJECT : MIDEASTFOR: REASSURANCES REGARDING FORCE ROLE

REFERENCE : STATE 45838

1. HAVING REVIEWED INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL, I HAVE SOME DOUBTS ABOUT THE TACTICAL DESIRABILITY OF THE APPROACH SUGGESTED. AS DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL, FROM GOB DECISION OCTOBER 1973 UNTIL MY ARRIVAL IN JUNE 1974, USG HAD INTERMITTENT CONTACTS WITH AMIR OF BAHRAIN ON QUESTION MIDDLE EAST FORCE STATUS. GENERAL THRUST OF AMIR'S POSITION WAS CONSTANT REASSURANCE THAT NAVY WOULD REMAIN, BUT HIS REASSURANCES DID NOT RESULT DURING THAT PERIOD IN ANY CHANGE IN FORMAL GOVERNMENT POSITION. IT IS LARGELY FOR THIS REASON THAT SINCE JUNE WE HAVE SCRUPULOUSLY DEALT THROUGH FOREIGN MINISTER WITH GOB CABINET ON THIS ISSUE. THIS METICULOUS REGARD FOR CONSTITUTIONAL ROLES OF AMIR AND CABINET APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN APPRECIATED BY BOTH, AND TACTICALLY IT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL. WE HAVE GONE THROUGH TRYING, UNCERTAIN AND CRITICAL STAGES OF MIDDLE EAST FORCE QUESTION SUCCESSFULLY WITHOUT RESORTING TO NEED TO GO FORMALLY DIRECTLY TO AMIR AND HENCE APPEAR TO BE GOING OVER CABINET'S HEAD. HENCE I HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT TACTICAL DESIRABILITY WITH MAJOR PROBLEMS RESOVLED, OF GOING DIRECTLY TO AMIR ON THIS QUOHI FINAL POINT UNQUOTE UNLESS WE PROCEED BY FIRST APPROACHING FOREIGN MINISTER AND THEN PRIME MINISTER. IMPORTANCE OF THIS PROCEDURAL ASPECT IS THAT

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ONE OF QUOTE POLITICAL UNQUOTE PROBLEMS WHICH GOB CLAIMS

TO HAVE WITH NAVAL PRESENCE IN THAT CRITICS REGARD IT AS RELIC OF QUOTE COLONIAL PAST UNQUOTE WHEN FOREIGN POWERS DEALT DIRECTLY WITH TRADITIONAL RULERS AND BEFORE USG-BAHRAINI RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPED INTO FORMAL ONE BETWEEN CONSTITUTIONALLY CONSTITUTED GOVERNMENTS. AWKWARDNESS OF BYPASSING FOREIGN MINISTER AT THIS POINT HIGHLIGHTED BY HIS FEBRUARY 27 COMMENTS TO NEW CMEF ADMIRAL BIGLEY IN WHICH ACTING AS OFFICIAL GOB SPOKESMAN, HE ASSURED ADMIRAL AND ME OF GOB'S CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR US NAVY PRESENCE IN GULF OPERATING OUT OF BAHRAIN.

2. BY APPROACHING THIS PROBLEM THROUGH WHAT GOB WOULD REGARD AS PROPER CHANNELS, IN MY VIEW WE STAND BETTER CHANCE OF WRAPPING UP MATTER PROMPTLY WHILE AVOIDING EXPANDING REASSURANCES REGARDING MIDDLE EAST FORCE IN MANNER WHICH MIGHT CAUSE US DISCOMFORT. THEREFORE, REQUEST AMENDED INSTRUCTIONS TO PERMIT MY APPROACHING FOREIGN MINISTER FIRST ALONG LINES STATE 45838. I WOULD SEEK FOREIGN MINISTER'S CONFIRMATION THAT TEXTUAL PROBLEM WITH OUR REASSURANCES REISED BY BAHARNA REFLECTS FIRM CABINET POSITION AND INDICATE THAT IF THIS IS FACE IHAM INSTRUCTED TO APPROACH PRIME MINISTER. (FYI SINCE MY FEBRUARY 17 MEETING WITH BAHARNA (MANAMA 204), FOREIGN MINISTER PERSONALLY HAS REITERATED QUOTE GOB UNQUOTE DESIRE THAT WE STRENGTHEN REASSURANCES ALONG LINES PARA 6 MANAMA 204 END FYI).

3. AS POINTED OUT PARA 5, MANAMA 204, ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF GOB POSITION SEEMS TO BE SEEKING LANGUAGE RELATING ROLE OF MIDDLEEAST FORCE SPECIFICALLY TO GENERAL GULF POLICY STATEMENT CONTAINED IN PROPOSED TEXT TRANSMITTED STATE 18316. IN PARA 3 REFTTEL I AM AUTHORIZED TO ASSURE AMIR VERBALLY THAT QUOTE MIDDLE EAST FORCE HAS ALWAYS OPERATED IN THE PAST AND WILL CONTINUE TO OPEGATE IN THE FUTURE IN THE SPIRIT OF SUPPORT FOR THIS POLICY. UNQUOTE THIS MAY INDEED BE ALL THE LANGUAGE THAT THE GOB SEEKS AND BY ADDING IT AFTER PENULTIMATE QUOTE GENERAL POLICY UNQUOTE SENTENCE CONTAINED PARA 4 STATE 18316, WE MIGHT HAVE WRITTEN TEXT ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH PARTIES. IN APPROACHING FOREIGN MINISTER, MAY I BE AUTHORIZED TO SUGGEST IF NECESSARY,

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INCLUSION THAT LANGUAGE AS OUR RESPONSE TO GOB REQUEST CONVEYED BY BAHWRNA FEBRUARY 17?

4. DEPT MAY WISH PASS THIS MESSAGE TO SECDEF, CNO, JCS, CINCUSNAVEUR AND COMIDEASTFOR.
TWINAM

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NNN

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